

HOLT SUPPORTS EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

(Washington, D.C.) – Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) tonight supported the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2009, H.R. 3548, which would extend an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits to individuals who have exhausted their current benefits in states with unemployment rates above 8.5 percent. With New Jersey's unemployment rate at 9.4 percent, by the end of September it is estimated that 22,000 New Jerseyans will have exhausted their unemployment benefits. This bill would provide them with direct relief. The House is expected to pass the bill tonight.

"In tough economic times, Congress and the President have worked together to extend unemployment benefits when needed," Holt said. "The previous extensions of unemployment insurance during this current recession have helped many New Jersey residents keep a roof over their head and food on the table when times were tough. In this tight job market and with the economy just starting to show signs of recovery, there are still six unemployed workers for each job opening and more than five million people who have been unemployed for more than six months."

It is estimated that by December, the 13-week extension of unemployment would benefit 1 million Americans – including 42,000 New Jersey residents – who will be looking for work and have exhausted their existing unemployment benefits.

"I hear all the time from Central New Jersey residents who are working hard each day to find a new job," Holt said. "Recently, a Mercer County resident wrote me to say his wife had been out

of work for 11 months. As he wrote, 'The jobs are just not available for her to go back to work.' This bill answers his plea and the pleas of countless other out of work New Jersey residents to extend unemployment benefits while they continue to search for employment."

Economists have argued that the extension would provide immediate, effective stimulus to the economy. According to Moody's chief economist Mark Zandi, every dollar spent on unemployment benefits generates \$1.63 in new demand. The bill does not add to the deficit, by off setting its cost with a one year extension of an employment tax that has been in place for 30 years.

"Our government must help those in need as they seek new work. Morally, it is the right thing to do and the economists tell us that unemployment benefits are one of the most cost-efficient and fast-acting forms of economic stimulus," Holt added.

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